

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 191792
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SUBJECT: REPORT OF VISITING MISSION TO OBSERVE MICRONESIAN
CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM: DRAFT OBSERVATIONS AND
CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY: IN ITS UNCLEARED DRAFT OBSERVATIONS AND CON-
CLUSIONS ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM, THE VISITING
MISSION MAKES THE FOLLOWING MAIN POINTS:

----THE REFERENDUM WAS WELL ORGANIZED. SOME CONFUSION
AROSE BECAUSE OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE VOTING IN
MUNICIPALITIES OTHER THAN THEIR OWN.

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PAGE 02 STATE 191792

---- THE MISSION SAW NO SIGN OF IMPROPER INTERVENTION
BY THE ADMINISTRATION IN THE CAMPAIGN WHICH WAS PURSUED
WITH VARYING INTENSITY IN DIFFERENT DISTRICTS. THE
MISSION BELIEVES THE ADMINISTRATION MAINTAINED STRICT
NEUTRALITY.

---- IN PALAU AND THE MARSHALL ISLANDS (M.I.) SUPPORTERS
ARGUED THAT US AGREEMENT TO SEPARATE STATUS NEGOTIATIONS
HAD INFLUENCED THE OUTCOME.

---- THE MISSION RECEIVED SEVERAL COMPLAINTS FROM BOTH SIDES ABOUT FINANCE BUT HAS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE AVAILABILITY OR LACK OF FINANCE WAS A DETERMINING FACTOR IN THE OUTCOME.

---- VOTING ARRANGEMENTS WERE GOOD AND THE VOTERS COULD BE SATISFIED THAT BALLOTING WAS SECRET.

---- PEOPLE WHO SPOKE TO THE MISSION APPEARED TO HAVE A SUFFICIENT UNDERSTANDING OF THE MAIN PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION AND A CLEAR AWARENESS THAT THE REFERENDUM ALSO CONCERNED UNITY. THE ESG PROGRAM CONTRIBUTED VALUABLY TO AWARENESS OF THE ISSUES.

---- PEOPLE WERE CONCERNED ABOUT IMPENDING STATUS CHANGES IMPLIED BY THE REFERENDUM AND RELIEVED TO BE TOLD THAT 1981 IS A TARGET DATE DEPENDING UPON COMPLETION OF ARRANGEMENTS TO REPLACE THE TRUSTEESHIP AGREEMENT (TA).

---- THE MISSION RECOMMENDS THAT THERE SHOULD BE A PLEBISCITE ON FUTURE STATUS WITH A TC VISITING MISSION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 03 STATE 191792

PRESENT BEFORE ANY FIRM DECISION IS TAKEN ABOUT THE BASIS ON WHICH THE TA SHOULD BE ENDED. US ESCORT OFFICER DOES NOT ANTICIPATE THAT THE MISSION WILL SUGGEST ANY SUBSTANTIAL REVISION OF THE OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS. THE MISSION PLANS TO COMPLETE ITS REPORT BY EARLY OCTOBER. FURTHER SECTIONS ON COUNTING, ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS AND SUMMING UP REMAIN TO BE DRAFTED.

1. DURING THE THREE-DAY STOP IN HONOLULU AFTER DEPARTING THE TRUST TERRITORY, VISITING MISSION CHAIRMAN BYATT (UK) AND MISSION MEMBERS GARRIGUE (FRANCE), HARDEN (UK) AND JULIENNE (FRANCE) DRAFTED MOST OF THE OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE VISITING MISSIONS REPORT, AS WELL AS PRELIMINARY DRAFTS OF SEPARATE SECTIONS ON THE INDIVIDUAL DISTRICTS. NEITHER WOODS (UK) NOR BROCHENIN (FRANCE), THE REMAINING TWO MEMBERS WHO WERE STILL IN THE TT OBSERVING BALLOT COUNTING, PARTICIPATED IN OR CLEARED THE DRAFT, BUT ESCORT OFFICER (KRIENDLER) DOES NOT ANTICIPATE THAT THE MISSION WILL SUGGEST ANY SUBSTANTIAL REVISIONS OF THE OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS. THE OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS DO NOT COVER THE COUNTING YET SINCE REPORTS ON THE COUNTING WERE NOT AVAILABLE. THE OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE MISSION'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE CONDUCT OF THE REFERENDUM. THE MAIN

POINTS ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW. A COPY OF THE OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS IS BEING PROVIDED TO USUN (B.J. JONES) AND TO AMBASSADOR ROSENBLATT IN MAJURO FOR OMSN AND STATUS LNO.

2. SUMMARY OF DRAFT OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS:

---- A. INTRODUCTION. THE MISSION WAS SENT TO OBSERVE THE REFERENDUM. IT DID NOT THINK IT APPROPRIATE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 04 STATE 191792

PASS JUDGMENT ON EVENTS PRIOR TO THE DECISION TO HOLD THE REFERENDUM, AND OBSERVATIONS ARE CONFINED TO EVENTS GERMAIN TO THE REFERENDUM. THE MISSION MAINTAINED A HIGH PROFILE; ITS PRESENCE WAS WELCOMED;

---- B. ORGANIZATION. THE REFERENDUM WAS WELL ORGANIZED. THE MISSION DOES NOT SHARE THE VIEW, EXPRESSED BY MANY PEOPLE THAT THE REFERENDUM WAS HELD TOO EARLY. DESPITE SOME COMPLAINTS IN PALAU, THE WORDING OF THE BALLOT SEEMED AS FAIR AS COULD BE DEVISED. THE REGULATIONS WERE COMPLEX AND IMPOSED A HEAVY BURDEN ON POLLING OFFICIALS. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO VOTED IN MUNICIPALITIES OTHER THAN THEIR OWN WAS HIGHER THAN ANTICIPATED CAUSING DELAYS AND SOME CONFUSION. THOSE RESPONSIBLE MAY WISH TO CONSIDER FOR A POSSIBLE FUTURE REFERENDUM WAYS OF REDUCING THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE VOTING BY AFFIDAVIT WITHOUT DENYING PEOPLE THE OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE.

---- C. THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN.

----- (1) GENERAL. THE CAMPAIGN WAS PURSUED WITH VARYING INTENSITY. IN PALAU MUCH MUTUAL SUSPICION AND SOME BITTERNESS WAS ENGENDERED. THE MISSIONS SUSPECTS THAT VOTERS IN PALAU, THE MARSHALLS AND PONAPE, WHERE THERE WAS ACTIVE CAMPAIGNING, WERE BETTER INFORMED ABOUT THE ISSUES THAN IN THE OTHER DISTRICTS.

----- (2) ROLE OF THE ADMINISTRATION. THE MISSION SAW NO SIGN OF IMPROPER INTERVENTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH IN THE CAMPAIGN AND BELIEVES THAT THE ADMINISTRATION SUCCEEDED IN MAINTAINING THE POSITION OF COMPLETE NEUTRALITY IT SOUGHT. THE MISSION CONSIDERS THE POLICY OF ALLOWING PUBLIC EMPLOYEES TO ENGAGE IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 05 STATE 191792

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES ON THEIR OWN TIME TO BE SENSIBLE BUT WAS GRATIFIED TO OBSERVE THAT THE TOP TT STAFF,

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS AND THOSE ENGAGED IN ADMINISTERING THE REFERENDUM MAINTAINED A ATTITUDE OF NEUTRALITY AT ALL TIMES.

-----IN PALAU AND THE MARSHALLS, SUPPORTERS OF THE CONSTITUTION CLAIMED THAT U.S. AGREEMENT TO INCLUDE THE PALAU AND MARSHALLS ISLANDS POLITICAL STATUS COMMISSIONS IN THE STATUS NEGOTIATIONS TENDED TO INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME OF THE REFERENDUM. IN PALAU, A SIMILAR POINT WAS MADE ABOUT THE DISTAD'S APPROVING THE DISTRICTS LEGISLATURE'S PROCLAMATION OF A SEPARATE MARITIME ZONE. THE FIRST DECISION WAS TAKEN WITH THE CONCURRENCE OF THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA (COM) AND THE SECOND IN PURSUANCE OF AN ACT OF THE COM.

----- (3) FINANCE. THE MISSION RECEIVED SEVERAL COMPLAINTS FROM BOTH SIDES ABOUT THE FINANCING OF THE CAMPAIGN CONCERNING: COM FUNDS, M.I. AND PALAU DISTRICT LEGISLATURE FUNDS AND AN ALLEGED NAURU LOAN, THERE SEEMS LITTLE DOUBT THAT MORE MONEY WAS AVAILABLE TO ONE SIDE THAN TO THE OTHER BUT TO DIFFERENT SIDES IN DIFFERENT DISTRICTS. HOWEVER, IN GENERAL, THOSE WHO WISHED HAD FREE ACCESS TO THE MAJOR MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION, THE GOVERNMENT RADIO. THE MISSION HAS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE AVAILABILITY OR LACK OF FINANCE WAS A DETERMINING FACTOR IN THE OUTCOME OF THE REFERENDUM.

----- (4) ACCESS TO THE MEDIA. ADMINISTRATION POLICY WAS TO ALLOW EQUAL RADIO TIME TO SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS.

---- D. VOTING ARRANGEMENTS. SUCH MINOR PROBLEMS AS AROSE WERE DUE TO UNFAMILIARITY WITH THE SOMEWHAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 06 STATE 191792

COMPLEX REGULATIONS AND WERE NOT OF CONSEQUENCE. THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR VOTING WERE GOOD. IN PARTICULAR, THE POLL WAS CONDUCTED SO THAT THE VOTERS COULD BE SATISFIED THAT THE BALLOTING WAS SECRET.

---- F. UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUES. MANY PEOPLE WERE CONFUSED BY THE AGREEMENTS IN THE CAMPAIGN AND ANXIOUS FOR DISINTERESTED ADVICE ON HOW TO VOTE (WHICH THE MISSION AVOIDED GIVING). SINCE PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED MEETINGS WITH THE MISSION WISHED TO DISCUSS OTHER MATTERS, IT WAS DIFFICULT TO ASCERTAIN HOW WELL PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION, BUT THOSE WHO SPOKE TO THE MISSION APPEARED TO HAVE A SUFFICIENT UNDERSTANDING OF THE MAIN PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION AND A CLEAR AWARENESS THAT THE REFERENDUM

ALSO CONCERNED THE ISSUE OF UNITY. THE MANY ESG VISITS

AND RADIO BROADCASTS CERTAINLY PROVIDED PEOPLE WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO INFORM THEMSELVES, EVEN IF NOT ALL AVAILLED THEMSELVES OF IT. THE MISSION BELIEVES THAT THE ESG PROGRAM CONTRIBUTED VALUABLY TO THE ELECTORATE'S AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE REFERENDUM AND THE BROAD OUTLINES OF THE CONSTITUTION. QUESTIONS PUT TO THE MISSION DEMONSTRATED THAT THE AVERAGE VOTER WAS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT IMPENDING CHANGES IN MICRONESIA'S POLITICAL STATUS WHICH THE REFERENDUM IMPLIED THAN THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT THE SECTION OF THE CONSTITUTION WHICH ATTRACTED THE MOST FAVORABLE MENTION IN THE CENTRAL DISTRICTS WAS THAT WHICH PROVIDED FOR ITS SUBSEQUENT AMMENDMENT AND THAT THE REPLY TO QUESTION WHICH CLEARLY CAUSED THE GREATEST RELIEF WAS THE EXPLANATION THAT 1981 WAS ONLY A TARGET DATE FOR TERMINATION WHOSE ACHEIVEMENT DEPENDED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 07 STATE 191792

ON PRIOR AGREEMENT ON THE ARRANGMENTS WHICH WOULD TAKE THE PLACE OF THE TRUSTEESHIP AGREEMENT. THE MISSION EXPLAINED AT NUMEROUS MEETINGS THAT THE PRESENT REFERENDUM CONCERNED ONLY THE CONSTITUTION AND THAT THERE WOULD BE A LATER OPPORTUNITY TO DECIDE WHAT WOULD BE MICRONESIA'S POSITION IN THE WORLD COMMUNITY AFTER TERMINATION. THE MISSION RECOMMENDED THAT THERE SHOULD BE A PLEBISCITE ON FUTURE STATUS BEFORE ANY FIRM DECISION IS TAKEN ABOUT THE BASIS ON WHICH THE TA SHOULD BE ENDED, AND THAT THE UNTC SHOULD ENSURE THAT A VISITING MISSION IS PRESENT IN MICRONESIA DURING SUCH A PLEBISCITE.

---- G. COUNTING. (TO BE DRAFTED.)

---- H. ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS. (TO BE DRAFTED.)

---- I. SUMMING UP. (TO BE DRAFTED.)

END SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.

3. IN SEPARATE PRELIMINARY DRAFT SECTIONS ON EACH OF THE SIX DISTRICTS, THE MISSION DESCRIBES ITS VISIT, THE CAMPAIGN AND VOTING IN SOME DETAIL. THESE SECTIONS ARE TO BE SUBSTANTIALLY EDITED AND REVISED. THE MISSION PRESENTLY PLANS TO COMPLETE ITS REPORT BY EARLY OCTOBER

4. COMMENT. THE ESCORT OFFICER'S OWN OBSERVATIONS SUPPORT THOSE OF THE MISSION.

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